REMARKS

The Examiner's Final Office Action dated May 14, 2002 has been received and its contents carefully considered. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the Amendment above, and further in view of the following comments.

Claims 1and 3-8 are currently pending in the instant application, claim 1 being the sole independent claim, and claims 3-8 depending either directly or indirectly therefrom. Claim 2 has been canceled.

I. Amendments to the application

The proposed amendments in the instant communication concern: (1) the incorporation of the subject matter of claim 2 into independent claim 1; (2) the amendment of claims 3 and 4 to depend from claim 1 instead of claim 2; and (3) the amendment of claim 1 to express what was inherent in claim 1: that the contact set includes the plurality of contact elements.

The amendments clearly do not introduce new matter into the application, and do not raise new issues. With respect to item (3), the attention of the Examiner is invited to Section II below.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter the amendments into the application.

II. Rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-8 have been rejected under the second paragraph of Section 112 as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner asserts that "[i]t is unclear if the plurality of contact elements is related to the contact set or they are not

related."

It is submitted however, that the specification leaves no doubts as to the relationship between the contact set of the multipole electrical connector and the contact elements. At page 2 of the specification, line 13, an embodiment of the multipole electrical connector is identified as connector 11 in Figures 1 and 2. At lines 17-19 of the same page, an embodiment of the contact set of the multipole electrical connector 11 is identified as contact set 14. At lines 17-22, the contact set is described as being supported in housing 16 of the connector 11 by being partially extrusion coated with plastic, or as being clamped between the two halves of housing 16 (i.e. the contact set is part of the electrical connector). The contact set 14 is described at lines 24-25 as including a plurality of contact elements 17.

The claims, when read in light of the specification as noted above, leave no doubt that the contact set recited in the claims: (1) is part of the multipole electrical connector; (2) is in fact a "set," that is, a collection of components, by virtue of including the plurality of contact elements. It is in earnest not seen how any other interpretation of "contact set" recited in the claims could be said to be supported in the specification. It is thus clear, contrary to the assertions in the Final Action regarding the rejection of claims 1-8 under the second paragraph of Section 112, that the plurality of contact elements are related to the contact set.

In view of the above, the claims are definite under the second paragraph of Section 112. Nevertheless, a proposed Amendment to claim 1 appears above and in the attached Appendix in which the claim expressly states what is already inherent in the claim, that the contact set includes the plurality of

contact elements.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw his rejection of the claims under the second paragraph of Section 112.

III. Rejection under 35 USC 102(b)

A. Lundergan:

Claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Lundergan. Claims 3-5 depend from claim 1. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

Lundergan concerns an electrical terminal for making electrical connection with a square post within a housing. As shown in Fig. 1, a housing 1 has a plurality of cavities 3. Branches extend from inner ends of each cavity, these branches defining shoulders 9 and 11 "for latching a terminal in the cavity. The terminal includes wire 15 secured thereto by a crimp 17." Col. 2, 3rd full paragraph.

Lundergan does not disclose a "multipole electrical connector" having "a contact set" that includes "a plurality of contact elements" as recited in claim 1 as amended. In the instant invention, the multipole electrical connector with the contact set including the plurality of contact elements is configured such that, for each contact element, "each contact section is formed in one piece and with a fork shape." Thus, according to claim 1 as amended, the contact set includes a plurality of contact sections and therefore a plurality of "forks." Each of Lundergan's discrete connectors includes a single terminal secured to a wire by a crimp, and not a plurality of terminals, or "contact elements," as

recited in claim 1. In Lundergan, there is one terminal per connector, corresponding to one contact section and therefore one fork per connector. In the present invention as recited in claim 1, on the other hand, the multipole electrical connector includes multiple contact elements formed from a single-layer stamped grid that permit multiple electrical connections. This feature is simply missing from Lundergan.

In view of the above, Lundergan is inapplicable to independent claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable under Section 102(b) in view of Lundergan. In addition, dependent claims 3-5 are likewise patentable over Lundergan by being dependent from claim 1, and further for the particular additional features that they recite. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims under Section 102(b) in view of Lundergan.

B. Bouley

Claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Bouley. Claims 3-5 depend from claim 1. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

Bouley concerns an electrical connector for receiving and contacting a mating electrical connector, such as a circuit board. The contact element of Bouley's connector has a base having a blade portion that extends rigidly therefrom, the blade portion having stubs for attachment into a connector body, and a generally U-shaped element in a central region thereof for establishing electrical contact with a mating electrical connector. Bouley's connector further includes a terminal extending from the base thereof for

external electrical connections.

Similar to Lundergan, Bouley does not disclose a "multipole electrical connector" having "a contact set" that includes "a plurality of contact elements" as recited in claim 1 as amended. Each of Bouley's discrete connectors includes a single terminal, and although multiple arms are present for one connector, these arms are all part of a single electrical connection, and not a plurality of terminals, or "contact elements," as recited in claim 1. In Bouley, there is one terminal per connector, corresponding to one contact section. In the present invention as recited in claim 1, on the other hand, the multipole electrical connector includes multiple contact elements formed from a single-layer stamped grid that permit multiple electrical connections. This feature is simply missing from Bouley.

In view of the above, Bouley is inapplicable to independent claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable under Section 102(b) in view of Bouley. In addition, dependent claims 3-5 are likewise patentable over Bouley by being dependent from claim 1, and further for the particular additional features that they recite. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims under Section 102(b) in view of Bouley.

IV. Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)

Claim 6 has been rejected under Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lundergan in view of Francis. Claim 7 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Lundergan in view of Francis as applied to claim 6, and further in view of Zintler et al. Claim 8 has been rejected under Section 103(a)

as being unpatentable over Lundergan in view of Harting et al. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 6-8 all depend from independent claim 1. As noted in Section III above, Lundergan is inapplicable to claim 1 in the first instance. Lundergan does not disclose, or even suggest, a multipole electrical connector as recited in independent claim 1. Therefore, even assuming arguendo that there is motivation to combine Francis, Zintler et al. and Harting et al. with Lundergan as suggested by the Examiner, such combinations would not result in the instant invention as recited in claims 6-8.

Accordingly, claims 6-8 are patentable over the cited combination of references at least by virtue of depending from independent claim 1. Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw his rejection of the claims under 35 USC 103(a).

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Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **Appendix - Version with markings to show changes made.**

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration, withdrawal of all grounds of rejection and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are solicited.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments under 37 C.F.R. ' 1.16 or ' 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any matter regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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KENYON & KENYON
By: Richard M. Rosati
Registration No. 31,792

One Broadway
New York, NY 10004
Tel. No.: (212) 425-7200
Fax No.: (212) 425-5288

CUSTOMER NO. 26646
PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Claims

Please amend the claims as shown by the markups:

1. (Amended) A multipole electrical connector for providing a releasable coupling with a mating connector, comprising a contact set that is supported in the multipole electrical connector[; and], the contact set including a plurality of contact elements, each contact element including a contact section and a connecting section, wherein:

each contact section is formed together with each connecting section from a single-layer stamped grid, [and]

each contact section is arranged with each connecting section in a plane[.],

each contact section is formed in one piece and with a fork shape, and

each contact section includes a first limb and a second limb, the second limb being separated by a slit from the first limb and being disposed at least over a partial length over the first limb.

Please cancel claim 2.

3. (Amended) The connector according to claim [2]1, wherein:

the first limb and the second limb are disposed parallel to each other.

4. (Amended) The connector according to claim [2]1, further comprising:

a tie bar branching off perpendicularly from the first limb and from which the second limb emanates perpendicularly.